

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: WESTERN ART EXHIBIT

REF: REF: SOFIA 1236

1. WESTERN ART EXHIBIT DEFINITELY UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR BULGARIA, BUT QUESTION OF TIMING STILL UNSETTLED. AS POST IS AWARE, WE HAVE A PERIOR COMMITMENT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND WE ARE WAITING FOR CZECHS TO CONFIRM SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER SHOWING DATES PROPOSED TO THEM.

2. SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY AGENCY DESIRE TO SEND EXHIBIT TO SOVIET UNION ON MUSEUM TO MUSEUM EXCHANGE BASIS. AMON CARTER MUSEUM IN PROCESS OF OFFERING EXHIBIT TO SOVIETS AND WILL EXTEND LOAN OF PAINTINGS UNTIL JANUARY IF SOVIETS ACCEPT. HOWEVER, SUCH EXTENSION WILL BE MADE ONLY FOR SHOWINGS IN USSR.

3. THEREFORE, IF NEITHER CZECHS NOR SOVIETS ACCEPT, EXHIBIT COULD BE OFFERED TO BULGARIANS FOR SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 1974, PERIOD. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE DROPPING PROPOSED SHOWING IN DUBROVNIK IN AUGUST, 1974. THIS SHOWING HAS LOW PRIORITY IN IEE PLANS.

4. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH NO FIRM OFFER CAN BE MADE TO BULGARIANS

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UNTIL CZECH AND SOVIET SITUATION CLARIFIED, SUGGEST EMBASSY OFFER

EXHIBIT TO THEM, STATING THAT TIMING STILL UNCERTAIN. YOU MAY SAY THAT AUGUST MOST PROBABLE PERIOD BUT POSSIBILITY ALSO FOR PERIODS OFFERED TO CZECHS AND SOVIETS.

5. AGENCY STILL CONCERNED OVER BULGARIANS' DESIRE FOR RECIPROCITY, ALTHOUGH SENS OF SNOW-ARTHUR DISCUSSIONS IN VIENNA IN MAY SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT BULGARIANS PERHAPS INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY AND COULD NOT NECESSARILY PROVIDE AN EXHIBIT FOR SHOWING IN U.S. NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT AGENCY NOT IN POSITION TO EXPEND FUNDS OR PROVIDE ANYTHING MORE THAN FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE TO BULGARIANS SHOULD THEY WISH TO SEND EXHIBIT TO U.S. WE HOPE THAT BULGARIANS WOULD ACCEPT INFORMAL SUGGESTIONS FROM AMERICAN MUSEUM DIRECTOR ON TYPE OF EXHIBIT INTERESTING TO AMERICAN MUSEUMS SINCE CHANCES OF GETTING USUAL SOCIALIST REALISM-TYPE PAINTINGS ACCEPTED BY AMERICAN MUSEUMS VERY UNLIKELY. WILDER REPORTS THAT OUTSIDE OF SOME GRAPHICS AND THE OUTSTANDING COLLECTION OF ICONS IN THE CRYPT OF THE SOFIA CATHEDRAL, HE SAW NOTHING OF INTEREST IN BULGARIA. HE IS CERTAIN THAT ICON COLLECTION COULD BE SHOWN IN ANY TOP U.S. MUSEUM.

7. AGENCY WILL ADVISE EMBASSY ON CZECH RESPONSE TO EXHIBIT, AS WELL AS SOVIET REACTION. IT WILL ALSO BE PREPARED TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF DIVERTING EXHIBIT FROM DUBROVNIK IN AUGUST IF BULGARIANS ACCEPT EXHIBIT. IN SHORT, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MAKE EXHIBIT AVAILABLE.

8. POST REACTIONS TO THIS COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

DECONTROL DECEMBER 1, 1975. RUSH

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